

Winter Chills

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Summary: As the deep chill of winter settles in on a Berk out of it's prime, one broken family attempts to put years of hatred and difference behind them.

Winter Chills

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><p>Brittle frost crackled on the wood planks of Snotlout's bed as the older Viking lifted his body from the bed weakly. Snotlout turned his head slowly towards the long empty bed lump of furs beside his. Oh Ruffnutâ€| Why did you have to leave me so early? Snotlout brushed long strands of unkempt hair from his eyes as he carelessly threw on his old bear fur cape, which was worn from age, clumps of the beautiful black fur long gone or straggled into careless curls.

Snotlout looked outside the hole in his roof, an addition that had been added when the dragons had come to Berk, though now it wasn't needed anymore ever since the dragons had left three years ago.

_Why is everything that I care about taken from me? My dragon. My wife, and even my fatherâ€| Do the gods despise my failure to be anything helpful, or useful to Berk, that much of a thorn in their side? Must they torture me like this? _

The biting cold drove through Snotlout's bones as he slowly walked outside his house, feet dragging through the icy snow.

Snotlout's dull eyes, lifeless since both his wife and dragon's death, noticed something, a small glint in the frost. Snotlout walked towards it slowly, bending down as he stretched his hand through the

extremely cold snow. Fingers brushed against steel and with a gentle tug , Snotlout pulled out an old, dented helmet.

Snotlout's eyes widened as his hand slowly ran across the long, thin black horns, rubbing against the dull spikes at the top of the helmet. Snotlout's shoulders sagged as he lowered his forehead to the old, rusting helmet, eyes closing softly as tears slide down his cheeks.

"Ruffnutâ€¦ Oh, Ruffnut," Snotlout whispered, pain choking at his throat as a small, wracking sob shook his body. _The pain is worse every year that you are gone Ruffnutâ€¦ Everything has changed so muchâ€¦_

Snotlout put his hand to the ground, slowly lifting himself up wearily, hands clutched tightly around Ruffnut's helmet.

Snotlout walked back towards his house, shivering as a howl of icy wind blasted through the quiet town. Snotlout stopped at the door of his house, hand hovering an inch from the handle, fingers slowly clenching and unclenching as he hesitated. A small shake of his head made his decision as he gently pulled open the door to his house. A sudden howl of wind blasted through the house as he attempted to shut the door. Finally smashing the door shut he heard the steps above him creak lightly.

Casting a glance towards the stairs, though it was a hesitant, unsure, as his daughter, Smitelout, walked down the stairs towards him, a flash of anger glowing in her eyes as she looked at him.

"Smite... Hello." Snotlout said weakly as he gazed at his daughter, whose braided blond hair was edged with frost. "What are you doing up sweetie?"

Smitelout shoot her father a stony glare out of her ice-blue eyes as she stopped beside him, flicking her blond hair to her shoulder unconsciously, eyes wandering down to the helmet in Snotlout's hand.

"What are you doing with my mother's helmet Snotlout?" Smitelout hissed, fist clenching menacingly as her mouth curled down into an angry frown.

Snotlout backed away from his daughter as she stomped up to him, hands grasping for the helmet. Snotlout wrapped his arms around the helmet, hurt shadowing his dull ice-blue eyes.

"I miss her too Smite... But she doesn't just matter to you-

"No Snotlout. You let her die. You did nothing to protect her. You forced that thing to grow inside her when she was already so weak! You killed my mother you asshole! And all because you wanted another kid. I hope you're happy you greedy bastard." Smitelout's eyes blazed with fury as her hands wrenched Ruffnut's helmet away from Snotlout. Snotlout's eyes widened in shock at his daughter's words.

"Smite-

"No! Don't you dare talk to me father," she spat this venomously, "Murderer. I'm ashamed to have my name resemble yours. Who would ever want to be named after a killer anyways?"

Snotlout reached his hand towards his daughter, who shot him another icy glare of hatred.

"Don't touch me," Smitelout said, brushing her father's large hand off her shoulder forcefully.

Snotlout sighed, truly giving up hope for his daughter to ever see reason, backing away from the well-muscled female Viking.

"I'm sorry..." Snotlout whispered as his daughter turned away from him, stomping up to her room moodily.

Snotlout's eye glowed with pain as he slid to the floor, arms falling to his side's in defeat.

"I'm so sorry Ruff... It should have been me. Our daughters would never have voiced their anger to you. They would have been happier without me." Snotlout leaned his head against the wall of his house as he raised his hand to cover his glistening eyes.

The coals of the fire had nearly died by the time Snotlout finally picked his body up from where he had slumped earlier. Snotlout rubbed at his eyes, trying to scratch the sleepiness from his gaze. A yawn escaped from Snotlout as he picked up some extra logs, throwing them gently onto the fire.

Snotlout poked at the fire until small flames licked up the side of the damp logs, the smell of smoke flowing through the house. The stout Viking rubbed his hands together as he walked away from the fire, hoping to keep them somewhat warm, to find some bread rolls to heat up for him and his daughter.

As the black-haired Viking walked back to the fire, two stale loaves in his hands, he heard a creaking noise. Snotlout looked away from the stairs, knowing he would only receive a venomous glare from his daughter. No sound was uttered as Snotlout placed the bread on the small grille of steel, poking occasionally at the bread to check it's warmth.

The air crackled with hostility as Snotlout heard Smitelout sit next to him, wooden plate held out for the warmed bread. A sigh escaped Snotlout as he picked up a roll, handing it to his daughter cautiously. The instant Snotlout lifted the fork away from the bread Smitelout yanked the plate away from him, scooting to the other side of the hearth.

Snotlout risked a small glance towards his blond daughter, who seemed not to notice as she bit into the bread.

"Is it ok?" Snotlout asked, hopeful that his daughter wouldn't shoot him a nasty glance. Smitelout glanced up at her father, an annoyed expression shadowing her face as she noticed the hopeful look on his face.

"No. It's horrible. But not as horrible as you." Pain instantly replaced the shred of hope on Snotlout's face at her hostile words,

much to Smitelout's enjoyment.

Snotlout gritted his teeth angrily as he glanced at his daughter's smug grin. "Smitelout what the Hel is wrong with you? I'm your father! Not some punching bag for your anger! Losing her hurt me too! I'm not the insensitive person you always claim me to be! I loved Ruffnut with everything I had!"

Smitelout snarled at her father, fingers tugging through her braids. "Then why did you let her die if you loved her as you say you do-or did."

Snotlout pressed his palms into his face stressfully as he glanced up at his daughter, whose bony face resembled so much of Ruffnut it pained him to look at her.

"I didn't know she would get sick. She didn't either, mind you. Neither of us thought anything would happen. I should have known since you and your sister were both difficult births. I should have known that Ruff would have another difficult birth... And to make matters worse she was so weak from being sick-she still was sick when she went into labor. I... I couldn't have done anything even if I had the might of Thor, or the strength of Magni." Snotlout stopped talking as he leaned backwards in the small chair, stress eating away at him. "You can't wholly blame me for Ruffnut's death Smite. Fate wasn't on our side again. It seems to always be against us when I think about it... "

Smitelout looked up from her plate slowly, a small amount of hate leaving her face as she watched her father's eyes glow with a small hint of life.

"Your mother and I thought that maybe you and Svalva would love to have a baby brother-or sister-and Ruffnut knew I had always wanted a son. I tried to tell her that I loved you two more than anything and I didn't need any more kids. You two were perfect... But Ruffnut was stubborn-and even now I believe she wanted to see if the gods cursed her again... And they did."

Pain flushed through Snotlout's face as he shook his head sadly. "It was all my fault"

Snotlout's voice hitched as a memory of Ruffnut's frail, sick, body attempting to give birth to the already dead child, crawled through his mind like a parasite.

Smitelout's ice-blue eyes, the only trait she had seemed to receive from her father besides the muscular build of her body, tracked her father's eyes, surprised as a small tear slid down his cheek.

Agony shook Snotlout's body as memories of screams, fingers wrapping around his for the last time, and then stillness, utter stillness, blond braids never to swing, eyes never to glow and smile never to crack over lanky features again, tore through his mind.

"Ruffnut... I'm so sorry babe," the whisper escaped Snotlout as he sunk his head into his hands, a streak of tears staining his cheeks.

Smitelout glanced at her father, shocked as the normally stalwart and

emotionless Viking showed more emotions than she ever thought possible.

Hesitantly, softly, Smitelout stretched her hand to her father, wrapping her long arms around his stout figure, pulling him into a small hug.

"Father? Snotlout? I... I love you," Smitelout's voice cracked over the word love as she felt her father lean into her hug, slowly and unsurely.

Both father and daughter stayed in this warm embrace, a welcome change from the seven-year cold between them, for what seemed like an eternity.

Smitelout finally broke from the grasp first, unaccustomed to actually allowing affection from her father.

"Dad?" Snotlout looked up at his daughter, a glow of warmth sparking in his eyes for the first time in seven torturously long years. "Thank you..." Smitelout trailed off, unsure of what to say to a person she had never really shared a kind word with before that day, but a smile from Snotlout gave her all the answer she needed.

A sudden thought seemed to burst through Smitelout's mind. "What about Svalva? She hates you."

Snotlout stood up slowly, age creaking at his bones brittle as he shot a glance outside, the white snow glaring in the moonlight. "I will deal with it. She was always the least stubborn of you two."

Smitelout watched as her father placed his ram-horned helmet onto his head, strands of unkempt black hair flaring from the sides. The blond Viking watched as her father opened the house's door, a blast of frigid air blowing in immediately.

Smitelout's eyes flashed in worry as her father walked out into the frigid flurry of snow.

"Dad!" Smitelout roared as a huge gust of wind smashed the door closed in her face, causing her to stumble backwards painfully.

"No..." Smitelout braved opening the door, bracing her muscled body against the door so it couldn't wrench from her grasp. Nothing. A mask of white was all she could see. Not a glimpse of her father, anywhere.

Why did I let him go? she thought as she closed the door, knowing it was pointless for her to go into the blizzard too.

* * *

><p>Frost crackled in his hair, limbs unmoving as the Viking attempted to stand, to move. Fingers lay still, arms, legs, all unmoving. Nothing responding. Fear. Heart barely beating. Ice...seeping into his core.<p>

Must...get...out.

No movement came from the short Viking, limbs glued to his sides, dead from frost. Eyes open. Slow. Pain. Open. Whiteness, glaring and blindingly bright assailed the crisp blue eyes. Arm moved. Closed eyes. Whiteness gone.

Frost puffed from the Viking's mouth as a shaky breath exuded from the exhausted Viking.

Got to...move. For... The black-haired Viking's thoughts trailed away, emptiness invading his mind. A groan escaped his lips as he attempted to move his arm, consequently tearing ice-coated skin from his arm. A moan of pain whistled through his teeth as his arm fell to his side.

Ice-blue eyes opened slowly, adjusting slowly to the blinding white snow all around him. Slowly, softly, his eyes absorbed the mass of white frost coating his body.

I can't get out... he thought as his eyes shut in defeat. An eerie silence burst through the air as memories of the shrieking wind, biting frost, throwing him away forcefully, plummeting away from the warmth of the village.

I shouldn't have gone out... Then I wouldn't be in this mess. Agony burned through the Viking's core as he moved his leg weakly. It was broken, twisted under itself, bones unyielding to movement.

Why? Why... The Viking closed his eyes, accepting the bone-chilling feeling of sleep to consume him.

Warmth. Fiery warmth. Hands. Voice. Pain. Cold. Cold gone. Heat.

Voice... Voice...

"Snotlout! Come on! Please!" Hands. Shaking. Demanding. Wetness. Pain. Not...my...pain.

Arms wrapped. Warmth all around. Whispers. Hand, brushing through hair.

"Come on... Wake up. Please." Tears, streaking down face, hands tearing, holding, hair.

Eyes...slowly...open.

Blonde? Hope? Purple? Fangs... Sight returned to Snotlout slowly as worried hands ran through his hair.

"Ruff...is that you?" His voice was cracked, brittle with invasive frost as he glanced hopefully towards the female Viking.

"No... You're not with her, love. You're still here in Midgard." The voice softened as fingers gently splayed under Snotlout's chin.

"It's just me, Bryn. Just Bryn."

Snotlout's pained eyes widened in shock. "I thought you left?"

"No... I heard about a different island ravaged by the blizzard that hit Berk. I knew I had to come back to help you guys in case you were hit by the blizzard. Obviously you were...unfortunately. I just got here a bit ago. The storms been gone for awhile," Bryn said as she lifted the stout Viking upwards gently. "Desolation sniffed you out and landed where you were buried. I didn't understand why she and Destruction were melting this random pile of snow. But then Desolation pulled you out gently, and, well, here we are."

Snotlout's brain clicked on something. "You still have your dragon? How? I thought they all left, or were exterminated?"

Bryn sighed, casting a glance towards her pinkish-purple Zippleback dozing softly in the corner of the cave. "When I left we found this really warm place. It was nothing like this at all! I even meet different people. They did not speak Norse, or any language I've ever heard before. They feared DD and chased us off but I stayed for awhile... I'm guessing DD never heard the call to go into mass-hiding, and definitely no one was brave enough to attack us."

Snotlout was shocked. No one had seen a dragon for nearly four years and now, here before him was a beautiful Zippleback. "You are so lucky Bryn."

Bryn shook her head sadly. "No. I'm not..."

Snotlout didn't question her. "What about me? I don't feel anything...anywhere."

"You landed on a rock... I'm not a healer but I don't think you can move your legs, sweetie-" Bryn seemed to choke quietly, a blush forming on her cheeks. "Sorry..."

Does she like me? Snotlout wondered, watching closely as his friend bent over him gently, eyes focused on two wood splints, measuring them against his broken leg wordlessly.

"Bryn..." Snotlout's voice crackled, pain flooding through him as he collapsed onto his back.

Bryn stated in horror, hands going to the stout Viking worriedly. "No..."

Snotlout closed his eyes, already guessing why Bryn had said no.

"I won't make it will I?" Snotlout asked gently, accepting it with a sigh.

Bryn turned back towards him, her blue eyes glistening. "I...I... I don't think so. Your body is shutting down from the cold. I was too late to save you." A small sob wracked her body as she gazed into Snotlout's eyes.

"Bryn... It's not your fault. I blame you for nothing. You found me didn't you?" Snotlout's eyes glimmered as his old friend nodded slowly. "You have given me more help than you give credit to yourself. Thank you..." Snotlout felt a painful grasp of steel cold

in his lungs as a shattering cough emitted from his mouth. Pain blazed through Snotlout. So this is what dying feels like... Ruff...I'm sorry...

Bryn watched in horror as the handsome Viking's body shook, eyes shutting, chest rising jaggedly.

"Snotlout..." Bryn wrapped her arms around Snotlout, worry evident on her face. "Oh Snotty..."

Snotlout felt another fiery blast of pain splinter through his body, stalling his heart for a quick second. Snotlout felt Bryn press her head against his chest, hands grasping into the bear fur.

"I... I love you Snotlout," Bryn whispered softly, a single tear streaking down her cheek.

"I know... But... You know it...couldn't work...I loved Ruff..." Snotlout gasped, a small twinge of sadness for his friend crawling through his heart. Snotlout lifted his arm to her side. "Thank you! Please tell Svalva and Smite... I love them and always...will..."

Bryn's hands reached out nervously towards Snotlout's body, though she drew it back slowly as she felt how cold Snotlout's body already was. Bryn watched, heart hollow as Snotlout's eyes slowly, painfully started to lose the glow she had come to love since they were kids.

"Goodbye Snotlout. May you have great hunts, joy and happiness in Valhalla. I hope you are able to be happy there." Bryn said, a small expression of sadness on her face. Minutes passed till Bryn finally lifted her head and whistled softly, waking her Zippleback immediately. "Come on girl." The Zippleback nodded, walking over to the blond Viking, bowing each neck so Bryn could get on easier. The right head, Desolation, gently picked up Snotlout's body in her mouth, settling his body onto her back, in front of Bryn.

With one last check to make sure both she and Snotlout were held in properly to her dragon's back, and with a small nod to the Zippleback, the dragon lunged forwards, feet smashing against the ground as she rocketed out the cave entrance. Large purple wings snapped out, slicing the frozen air as she leapt upwards, soaring away towards the frozen village.

* * *

><p>"I never got to say anything to him, any kind of apology or even understanding. The last thing I ever said to him was that he was the reason I lost my mother, and I cared about her more. Why is it that I realise the wrongness in that only after our father is dead? Why can we, as human beings, only forgive when someone is gone? Are we _that _incapable of forgiveness?" Svalva's eyes brimmed with tears as she turned towards the few villagers who had braved coming out to the funeral, out of their warm homes.

Wind brushed through Svalva's thick black hair as she rubbed at her eyes weakly. _Sorry father! _A hand laid against her shoulder softly, squeezing ever so slightly. Svalva glanced up into the soft brown eyes of her husband, nodding thanks almost noticeably.

"While Berk may have lost many fellow friends and family, and our dragons, we still are strong. And no matter what happiness we will always be strong. For the memory of everyone who has sacrificed their lives for our village. We shall pay them all their due respects by not giving up. Every."

A small cheer erupted from the small crowd as tears flowed down Svalva's cheeks silently. "Sorry fatherâ€¦"

Rosy hues of sunset shone on the wings of the Zippleback as it and it's rider flitted away from Berk. Silence stretched between the three beings, though it was not a silence born from anger but respect.

Bryn gently stroked the scales of her Zippleback. "Let's go girl. We have no reason to stay, do we?"

Desolation and Destruction both growled in response, eyes flicking backwards to get a better view of their rider, heads bobbing slightly.

"Yeahâ€¦ That's what I thoughtâ€¦"

* * *

><p>Dragons leaving, Ruffnut dying, kids hating Snotlout. What isn't sad about this?

**Piece of info on Bryn. Ok so she may seem like an annoying nuisance because she likes Snotlout but hey. She is literally me in OC form and I adore Snotlout. Pshh my friends know I more than adore him) and so of course I would put my feelings into her. **

Also she lived on Berk but she was more of an outsider since she was from a different tribe when she was found by Stoick on a dragon raid when she was really young. She left Berk after most of the agng got married since she wanted to explore and she really didn't want to be forced into a marriage (especially since the guy she loves was married to Ruffnut).

End
file.